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EDITORIAL

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.

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MUCH excitement was created some little time ago over an Italian, said to be a degenerate, in or about Utica, N.Y., who made it his pastime to kill children. If the killing of children for sport is a symptom of degeneracy, and if the degeneracy is something peculiar to Utica, then the conclusion must be that Utica is as broad a town as this country, and that the degeneracy has become national. The multiplying incidents of children killed by automobiles—East, West, North and South—brings home the fact.

The driving over children, recklessly maiming, or killing them, and doing the deed with impunity, was one of what may be called the “apanages” of the feudal nobility of France during the Ancient Regime. The deed was so much an attribute of the nobility that history records this grievance as one of the palpitating grievances that “reckoning” was demanded for—and collected when the storm of the great Revolution broke out. Dickens, among novelists, embalms the hideous fact of this “noble” disregard of childlife in one of the opening chapters of his *Tale of Two Cities*. Read by the light of that manifestation of exultant and irresponsible power, the shocking recurrence of the modern slaughter of innocents by automobilists may well be considered as a sociologic manifestation.

’Tis not the automobiles of business concerns that figure as the instruments of child-killing. It is the automobiles of pleasure-riders. Moreover, the pleasure-riders are overwhelmingly from the “upper crust.” Among them there may be members of the Shoddyocracy, but these apes, or frogs who would inflate themselves to bull’s bulk, are not the tone-giving automobilists. These belong to a class that more and more assumes the manners, as it already enjoys many of the privileges, of the “nobility” just before its downfall in France. One of these manners is to have their pleasure rides frequently accompanied by a child’s cry of anguish and pain, not

infrequently accompanied by the child's death-rattle.

A curious thing, this Slaughter of Innocents—there seems to be more in it than superficially appears—it heralded the doom of Herod—it heralded the doom of the Ancient Regime—what does it herald to-day?—surely not the reign of Murder as an established institution—perchance the doom of Capitalism, the modern out-Heroder of the Herodian feudal nobility of France?

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